824
[283] from a living, corky, African Baobab (Adansonia digitata), called "demma". Rope is also made from a tropical creeper of lower altitudes, called "arag", or of reed fibers. Thatching grass of excellent quality is obtained from a strong, tall reed called "fäla" which resembles papyrus and grows on the shore of lakes. The "gecha" reed grows on the shore of rivers and is used to make the famous sun-umbrellas owned by every rural housewife, though once the privilege of kings and nobles.

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[372] Fuel - Charcoal for firing pottery and smithing is made from the big "amfar" tree. Now also from the eucalyptus tree, but in rural areas the umbrella tree; "grar" is preferred because it does not have to be paid for.

[386] Dyestuff - the bark of the "wayba" tree was used to make the yellow dye for the togas of monks, now only in the more remote, change-resisting monasteries (most others wear white).

[222] Many other basic necessities for life and comfort are also obtained by collecting, by remembering where in the bush one has encountered the right kind or shape of plant, rather than planting and caring for it in gardens.

[388] Soap - is obtained in rural areas from the crushed fruit of the "endod" bush (Sircunia Abyssinica).

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281 Tannin for tanning and curing hides - is obtained from the bark of the "beshesha" bush; from the

321 415 The Amhara warrior sought to have at least one very large horn containing mead (cattle was sometimes bred for large horns or bought from Galla), and smaller ones for gunpowder or for the staple mixture of salt and barbare, or nug paste. The narrow end is sealed with a wooden plug. In the past they were sometimes of buffalo horn, but now mostly of cow's horn. One observer noticed a striking similarity between this container and ancient Egyptian ones of smaller size, used to contain antimony for eye toilette.[65]

[171]

Perhaps this may give a clue as to why the drinking utensils made of horn look so strikingly European, amid the other Amhara containers which are more African than Middle Eastern. Nearly every Amhara peasant has at least one large drinking cup of horn; besides the usual clay cups used for coffee. The large horn cup is used by the head of the house for barley beer. Churches usually have several, especially the "tewa" used at church feasts or memorial feasts such as tazkar. An average-sized one measures about 4-1/2 inches high, has a 5 inch diameter at the top, but only 1-1/2 inche diameter at the bottom. A church which has a large working retinue of däbtära and hangers-on, acolytes, etc., often makes a practice of giving one as a courtesy gift to deserving peasants at plowing time, with the blessings of the church for a good harvest.

324 412 The main stone utensil that men make for the house is the mano-type stone called "mäj", usually selected from a river bed and further shaped so that the bottom is flat and the rounded top fits comfortably into the palm of the housewife when she grinds the grain. She does this by a forward and backward motion, not the more advanced rotary

65. Cohen, Marcel: Flagon Abyssin en corne..., Paris 1920, pp.265-6.

324 412 motion, and the rotary quern of ancient Rome and Alexandria is of course entirely unknown.

251 333 Bins for storage of grain are also made by men. The two major types are the "gota", made of rings of sundried mud and straw, which are built up later inside the hut; and the "gotära" bin, made of a barrel-like skeleton of sticks, plastered with mud and left to harden in the sun. The former can, of course, be built higher, as much as 7 feet tall, while the latter is limited to the size of the door of the tuqul.

415 Gourds are widely raised as utensils, in line with the pattern of using natural products directly. Sometimes the gourds ("qel") grow on vines supported on the roof of the tuquol. When at full size, some are cut lengthwise so that each half represents a drinking cup with its own natural handle affixed. Travellers always carry these. They also carry gourds used as waterbottles ("wamära") with the top cut off and refixed to serve as a removable plug. Or, the narrowing top of a gourd is cut off and used by women while carding raw cotton on a bowstring. Artists of chiefs and feudal "great men" paint designs and scenes on gourds ("ankola") belonging to their patrons.

285 415 Basketry can be made by either men or women, often by servants and ex-slaves, but since it is not considered specialized, there is no shame attached to this work. Both coiling and weaving techniques are used, the latter more often. Noteworthy is the frequent close weaving which results in watertight containers, further secured with hot milk and fumigating with gum woods. This method,

463 prestige involved is slight--occurring only if there is
464 kinfolk nearby shamed by such manual labor. It is on a social level with the gathering of kosso-bark by a poor Amhara woman.

463 Some farmers have a part-time specialty of fashion-
[324] ing the stone used as mano by the housewife when she grinds grain. They are called "wäqari". No shame is involved; it is considered like a hobby, like whittling away at wood.

[693 Some heads of farming families are adept at "talk-
554] ing well in court" for which they achieve great prestige--the major method of achieving prestige. They are called "täbäqa" lawyers, and not full-time specialists since all they can expect, if they win the case, is a bellyful of barley beer or an occasional gift, but they are guests of honor at the victory feasts and "men of reknown".

A large number of semi-specialists fall into the
[23] category of caretakers, "täbaqi". Cowherds and shepherds, if they are grown men not useful at anything else, are included in this category.

463 Part-time employment is found by the former feudal
265 chamberlain, "agafari", at big weddings of landholding peasants or in towns. They act as caterers, order the bread, meat, beer, mead, etc. They are experts at headwaiting, and know just whom to seat at what table or around which "mäsob", according to rank, and they indicate to each servant to whom to serve beer and to whom the more expensive and more noble mead. This was